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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY AUGUST 18, 2004

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for August 18, 2004. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

CUMHURIYET, TURKIYE, VAKIT, SABAH (Guneş Supplement), ZAMAN, BOLGE: An unidentified assailant unleashed a spray of gunfire toward Adana Municipality on August 17 and ran away from the scene in a car which had parked behind the municipal building. No casualties have been reported. The driver of the car, Halil Ibrahim Kirici, 28, was arrested by police. Separately, the Adana Municipality Secretary's Consultant Gokcen Aydin was wounded in the leg during an armed attack in front of the Municipality on August 6.

TERCUMAN, ULKEDE OZGUR GUNDEM, EVRENSEL: PKK/Kongra-Gel militants attacked guards deployed in Oguldami village of Gulpinar, Van province with long-barrel weapons, killing one guard. GOT dispatched reinforcements to the village and launched an intensive operation in the region. Ulkede Ozgur Gundem reported that as a result of a gun fight that broke out between village guards in Kizilagac, Mus province, about an unknown dispute, one village guard was wounded. An investigation about the matter is being conducted by GOT forces. Ulkede Ozgur Gundem also reported that HPG guerillas ambushed a military convoy from the Mila Gurani Battalion near Silopi, Sirnak province. Two military vehicles were destroyed but no casualties have been reported.

TERCUMAN: GOT forces undertook stringent security measures throughout the country against possible PKK attacks on the anniversary of its foundation on August 15th. But what was expected did not happen. The PKK supporters did not undertake any violent actions. PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan allegedly instructed his supporters from the Imrali Prison that they should halt any actions until Turkey has obtained a date from the EU for its candidacy.

TERCUMAN, MILLIYET, HURRIYET: A group of five PKK/Kongra-Gel militants attacked a house in Mosul, Iraq, where it is alleged that guerillas affiliated with Osman Ocalan have been staying. Osman Ocalan recently split with from the PKK/Kongra Gel and founded the "Patriotic Democratic Party" in Iraq. The Iraqi Security Forces intervened in the incident and arrested one wounded PKK-Kongra-Gel militant and a car used in the attack.

HURRIYET: A monument-like grave has been built in Seyrantepe village of Pazarcik, Kahramanmaraş province, for high ranking PKK militant Engin Sincer, who had been killed in an internal dispute in the Kandil Mountains in Northern Iraq. Based on the rumors that an opening ceremony would the monument, Kahramanmaraş Governor Ilhan Atis circulated a notice canceling a variety of meetings in Pazarcik during August 17-18. He also closed the Pazarcik highway to traffic citing resurfacing of the road, in order to impede the opening ceremony of the monument.

EVRENSEL, SABAH: The Diyarbakir Chief Public Prosecutor's Office is examining the charges filed by the Diyarbakir Governor's Office against Mayor Osman Baydemir for visiting the family of a PKK/Kongra-Gel militant who had been killed in a recent operation in town. The Acting Chief Public Prosecutor, Faruk Kurt, said that the Heavy Penalty Court Prosecutor's Office was examining the information and evidence provided by the Governor's office to determine whether or not the case would be handled by them. Inspectors from the Interior Ministry concluded their investigation of the case and returned to Ankara. Mayors provided written materials to inspectors as required.

ULKEDE OZGUR GUNDEM: Following the PKK/Kongra-Gel's rocket attack at Special Team's Headquarter in Bicer Quarter of Hakkari on August 8th in which 2 Special Team Members were killed, GOT forces have intensified pressure on the public. An 8 p.m. Curfew has been implemented in Bicer Quarter. Searches at a police checkpoint at Depin Bridge at the entrance to Hakkari have been intensified. NGO representatives, such as the Human Rights Association, Mazlumder (Oppressed Persons' Association), KESK (Public Employees Union), DEHAP, and Free Party, requested an appointment for August 12 to meet with the Hakkari Governor to discuss issues concerning the citizens.

ULKEDE OZGUR GUNDEM, EVRENSEL: In Diyarbakir province, a committee from the Free Citizen Movement delivered to the Silvan Sub-governor's office 7,867 petitions advocating freedom for Abdullah Ocalan and advocating the GOT consider him a counterpart in solving the Kurdish issue peacefully. The six-person committee was detained by police. The crowd that gathered in front of the DEHAP office prior to delivering the petitions carried a banner reading "South, West, East: APO is the President of the Homeland" and shouted "Neither Denial, Nor Destruction, Nor Separatism; Democratic Republic." Tension arose when police filmed the I.D. cards of the people who tried to enter the square where the demonstration took place.

ULKEDE OZGUR GUNDEM: In Sanliurfa province, police detained Yakub Akbas and Abdullah Akbas for hanging banners publicizing Abdullah Ocalan's book entitled "Defending a People" in Eyyubiye Quarter on August 15. The Sanliurfa Heavy Penal Court imprisoned them for "Committing a crime by hanging Abdullah Ocalan's banners." In fact, the book, which covers Abdullah Ocalan's defense at court, is not prohibited.

ULKEDE OZGUR GUNDEM: In Hakkari province, the Public Prosecutor pressed charges against the Yuksekova DEHAP District Chairman Resul Temel for the speech he had delivered at the funeral ceremony of a Syrian national HPG guerilla, known as Zerdest, who had been killed during the GOT forces' raid at a house in Vezirava village on June 15. Temel, who gave a deposition to the Public Prosecutor yesterday, said the Public Prosecutor asked him what he had meant at the funeral by saying "We do not want anybody to be killed anymore. Everybody has to do his best so that the peaceful climate in our country will not be damaged and people will not be killed."

ULKEDE OZGUR GUNDEM: Migrant Association's Batman Chapter set up a five-person committee of experts to render legal and consultancy services to evicted villagers who are in the process of returning to their villages. These services will be provided to needy villagers for free.

CUMHURIYET: The National Education Ministry's research in Eastern and Southeastern Turkey revealed that only 50% of elementary school graduates have been attending secondary schools.

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